

on two omnibus amendments, but we still have in addition to the debate on the Hutchison amendment and a cloture vote on that amendment on Monday several other—perhaps three or four—amendments that will eventually require rollcall votes.

I regret that we haven't been able to go further today or to complete action on any of them. On the other hand, I think during the last literally 24 hours of the clock we have accomplished a great deal in connection with this bill. I hope that can be completed by the end of this Tuesday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

CONTINUING JUVENILE JUSTICE CONFERENCE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the Department of Justice is releasing a report on the success of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System in keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. In its first seven months of operation, national background checks have stopped 100,000 felons, fugitives and other prohibited persons from getting guns from licensed firearms dealers.

Unfortunately, it doesn't extend to all of the people who sell guns.

There is a major gun show loophole. Congress has been unwilling to close that because of the opposition of the gun lobby, even though, incidentally, we passed a measure that did close that loophole several months ago in the Hatch-Leahy juvenile justice bill. Even though we closed it, we have yet to move forward on the juvenile justice conference report. It had been hoped and I think the American people hoped that we would complete the juvenile justice bill prior to school opening.

I am hoping that we can complete it prior to Christmas vacation for schools, at the rate we have been going.

I talked to a lot of gun dealers at home who say they have to obey the law, they have to fill out the forms, they have to report whether somebody tries to buy a gun illegally, and they ask why they have to compete with those who can take their station wagon to a weekend flea market and sell guns out of the back of it.

This report is more concrete evidence that Congress should extend background checks to the sales of all firearms.

I want to commend the nation's mayors and police chiefs for coming to Washington today to demand action on the juvenile justice conference.

I hope the leadership in the Senate and the House will listen to what they said. I hope the majority will hear the call of our country's local officials and law enforcement officers to act now to pass a strong and effective juvenile justice conference report.

I am one of the conferees on the juvenile justice bill. I am ready to work with Republicans and Democrats to

pass a strong and effective juvenile justice conference report. I suspect most Americans, Republicans or Democrats, would like to see that. So far we have only had one meeting to resolve our differences. Even though we passed the Hatch-Leahy bill months ago, we have had only one conference meeting. In fact, that one meeting was 24 hours before we recessed for the August recess, almost guaranteeing there would be no more meetings.

We haven't concluded our work. The fact is school started without Congress finishing its work, and I think that is wrong. We have overcome technical obstacles, we have overcome threatened filibusters, but now we find that everybody talks about how we should improve the juvenile justice system and everybody decries the easy availability of guns, but nobody wants to do anything about it.

We spent 2 weeks, as I said, on the floor in May. We considered almost 50 amendments to the Senate juvenile justice bill. We made many improvements on the bill. We passed it by a huge bipartisan majority. Now I am beginning to wonder whether we were able to pass it because there was a private agreement that the bill would go nowhere.

We need to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children who do not know how to use them or plan to use them to hurt others. Law enforcement officers in this country need our help.

I am concerned that we are going to lose the opportunity for a well-balanced juvenile justice bill—one that has strong support from the police, from the juvenile justice authorities, from those in the prevention community at all levels. We are going to lose this opportunity because one lobby is afraid there might be something in there they disagree with.

I come from a State that has virtually no gun laws. I also come from a State that because of its nature that has extremely little crime. But I am asked by Vermonters every day when I am home, they say: Why has this bill been delayed? Aren't you willing to stand up to a powerful lobby? My answer so far has been, no; the Congress has not.

Due to the delays in convening this conference and then its abrupt adjournment before completing its work, we knew before our August recess that the programs to enhance school safety and protect our children and families called for in this legislation would not be in place before school began.

The fact that American children are starting school without Congress finishing its work on this legislation is wrong.

We had to overcome technical obstacles and threatened filibusters to begin the juvenile justice conference. It is no secret that there are those in both bodies who would prefer no action and no conference to moving forward on the issues of juvenile violence and crime. Now that we have convened this con-

ference, we should waste no more time to get down to business and finish our work promptly.

Those of us serving on the conference and many who are not on the conference have worked on versions of this legislation for several years now. We spent two weeks on the Senate floor in May considering almost 50 amendments to S. 254, the Senate juvenile justice bill, and making many improvements to the underlying bill. We worked hard in the Senate for a strong bipartisan juvenile justice bill, and we should take this opportunity to cut through our remaining partisan differences to make a difference in the lives of our children and families.

I appreciate that one of the most contentious issues in this conference is guns, even though sensible gun control proposals are just a small part of the comprehensive legislation we are considering. The question that the majority in Congress must answer is what are they willing to do to protect children from gun violence?

A report released two months ago on juvenile violence by the Justice Department concludes that, "data . . . indicate that guns play a major role in juvenile violence." We need to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children who do not know how to use them or plan to use them to hurt others.

Law enforcement officers in this country need help in keeping guns out of the hands of people who should not have them. I am not talking about people who use guns for hunting or for sport, but about criminals and unsupervised children.

An editorial that appeared yesterday in the Rutland Daily Herald summed up the dilemma in this juvenile justice conference for the majority:

"Republicans in Congress have tried to follow the line of the National Rifle Association. It will be interesting to see if they can hold that line when the Nation's crime fighters let them know that fighting crime also means fighting guns."

Every parent, teacher and student in this country was concerned this summer about school violence over the last two years and worried about when the next shooting may occur.

They only hope it does not happen at their school or involve their children. This is an unacceptable and intolerable situation.

We all recognize that there is no single cause and no single legislative solution that will cure the ill of youth violence in our schools or in our streets. But we have an opportunity before us to do our part. We should seize this opportunity to act on balanced, effective juvenile justice legislation, and measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and away from criminals.

I hope we get to work soon and finish what we started in the juvenile justice conference. We are already tardy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST— S.J. RES. 33

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, in view of the urgent nature of the subject involved, since the subject will be dealt with on Friday of this week, tomorrow, I thought we needed to proceed to have some debate and hopefully even a vote with regard to the matter of the pardon of the Puerto Rican terrorists.

So I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to S.J. Res. 33, a joint resolution deploring the actions of President Clinton with respect to clemency for FALN terrorists, and there be 2 hours for debate to be equally divided between the two leaders. I further ask consent that no amendments be in order to the resolution and that following the use or yielding back of the debate time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. DASCHLE. Reserving the right to object, let me say this resolution was introduced last night. It was only put on the calendar today. To my knowledge, very few, if any, people have had the opportunity to read the resolution, much less give much consideration to it. So I ask unanimous consent the majority leader's consent request be modified to conform with the regular order of the Senate and provide for amendments and no limit on debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, I think the Senator's point is well taken, that this has come up quickly. But there is a reason for that. This whole issue came out during the August recess period when Senators were back in their respective States. I think everybody was stunned and shocked and somewhat in disbelief that these 12 or so terrorists—I believe it was 16 total—were going to be offered this clemency and this pardon.

We just returned to the Senate for business on Wednesday of this week. There was no earlier opportunity to introduce this resolution, and I understand clemency takes effect tomorrow, on Friday. That is why it has been handled in this way.

Having said that, I inquire of Senator DASCHLE, with those amendments, any amendment that would be offered, would they be relevant to this subject, to the question of the clemency of these terrorists, or would it be his re-

quest that any amendment would be in order affecting any subject?

Mr. DASCHLE. If I can respond to the distinguished majority leader, first, let me say that nothing, as I understand it, in this resolution—again, I have only had a cursory opportunity to look at it—would do anything with regard to the President's actions. The President is going to be able to act with or without this resolution. So the timing of the resolution has no real bearing on the President's decision.

We can adopt or reject the amendment and the resolution at any time. That is, I think, what the majority leader's intent would be, to put the Senate on record with regard to the action, not prevent the President from doing so because this resolution does not prevent him; it simply comments on what they view to be the advisability of the resolution.

But in answer to the question of the majority leader, let me say, we would want to at least give our colleagues the right to offer amendments. I am not in a position at this moment to come to agreement with regard to what the amendments might or might not be. I simply am asking that in the context of legislation and the Senate rules the regular order be followed. The regular order is that Senators can offer amendments. It does not say the regular order requires germaneness or relevancy. The regular order is Senators have a right to offer amendments.

I simply ask in my unanimous consent request that the regular order under Senate rules be allowed in this case as one would expect they would be followed traditionally.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, first of all, I say to Senator DASCHLE, the Democratic leader, and other Senators on both sides of the aisle, since I believe there apparently will be objection, and there will probably be a vote on this at some point, we will be glad to work on both sides.

I know there is a feeling of outrage in the country and on both sides of the political aisle about this happening. We are going to express ourselves either before or after the clemency actually takes place. I extend that invitation to work with us to see if we can develop language that can have the type of broad support that I believe there is in this country on the whole against this action. In view of the request, I have to object to that addition to the unanimous consent request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair notes that the unanimous consent request by the minority leader is not in order. We first must dispose of the unanimous consent request of the majority leader before we can entertain an additional unanimous consent request.

Mr. LOTT. I believe under that circumstance then it goes back to the question of whether or not there is objection to my original request.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, as I understand it, the majority leader objects to my modification.

Mr. LOTT. Right.

Mr. DASCHLE. As a result of that, I object to the proposal as presented.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, in light of the objection, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for morning business, with Senators permitted to speak up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, this joint resolution will be eligible for Senate consideration on Friday. I will ask consent to proceed to the joint resolution on Friday, and if an objection is heard, I will move to proceed and file a cloture motion, and that cloture vote will occur at 5 p.m. on Monday. I urge my colleagues to join us in trying to work out language that can be acceptable to Senators on both sides who feel strongly about this.

Also, I notify Senators there will be no further recorded votes today or this week, but there will be stacked votes, probably three or four, at 5 o'clock on Monday next. I have notified Senator DASCHLE of that intent. I ask Senators to be sure to be here. We will not have recorded votes tomorrow. We will probably do some business, but it will not involve votes. The next votes will occur at 5 p.m. on Monday, and all Senators will be expected to be present and accounted for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

CONDEMNING GRANTING OF CLEMENCY TO CONVICTED TERRORISTS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I begin by thanking the majority leader for offering the resolution condemning the President's action in granting this clemency to convicted terrorists. What I want to do is begin by reminding people about the activities conducted by the organization to which these 16 terrorists belong. I then will remind people that we are about to see history repeat itself because a President has pardoned and given clemency to Puerto Rican nationalist terrorists before. Then I will make some basic observations about how outrageous I believe the President's action is.

First, I remind my colleagues that on November 1, 1950, two terrorists who were, or at least claimed to be, promoting independence for Puerto Rico attempted to shoot and kill President Truman. One of the gunmen was killed and the other was sentenced to death but President Truman subsequently commuted the sentence to life imprisonment. On March 1, 1954, three such